

Remarks

I. Status of Claims

Claims 1 and 3-11 are pending. Claim 1 is independent and claims 1, 3-5, 8, and 10 are amended. Claims 2 and 12 are canceled without prejudice and/or disclaimer to the subject matter therein.

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being allegedly indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claims 1, 3-8 and 10 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,022,281 to Heizman in view of Mark's Standard Handbook for Engineers, 10th edition. Claims 9 and 11 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Heizman '281 in view of Mark's and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,148,686 to Kataumi.

II. U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, Rejection

Claim 1 is amended and claim 12 is canceled to obviate any perceived ambiguity. As can be seen in FIG. 2, the connecting portions 45a-d are positioned at respective four corners of a parallelogram. In other words, the connecting link elements 43 and 44 are non-parallel and not the connecting portions.

III. Pending Claims

Claims 1, 3-8 and 10 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Heizman '281 in view of Mark's Standard Handbook for Engineers, 10th edition. Claims 9 and 11 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Heizman '281 in view of Mark's and in further view of Kataumi '686.

The Applicants submit that claim 1 is at least patentable over the cited references because claim 1 recites, "...at least one of said pair of connecting link elements is a curved link element which is curved so as not to interfere with a member other than said pair of connecting link elements located in the base member." (emphasis added)

With respect to claim 1, claim requires that at least one of the paired connecting link elements (e.g., link 44 in FIG. 2) is curved so as not to interfere with a member other than said pair of connecting link elements located in the base member. For example, as stated in paragraphs [0066] and [0080] of the specification, at least one link element of the pair of connecting link elements 43 and 44 may be curved between the connecting portions at opposite ends of the curved connecting link element in order to prevent the link element from interfering with a third member 100 within the base member 20. In contrast, none of the cited references disclose that at least one connecting link element is curved so as to not interfere with a member other than said pair of connecting link elements located in the base member.

In addition, in accordance with certain embodiments of the present invention, a shift lever is coupled to the shift lever side link elements so that the axis of the shift lever maintains a vertical position and does not tilt when the shift lever is moved in a selected direction. The document Mechanical Movements only discloses a parallelogram and does not disclose that the shift lever is coupled to the lever side element and that the shift lever maintains its vertical attitude.

For at least reasons, claim 1 and its dependent claims are patentable over the cited references.

IV. **Conclusion**


In light of the above discussion, Applicant respectfully submits that the present application is in all aspects in allowable condition, and earnestly solicits favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (202) 220-4420 to discuss any matter concerning this application. The Office is authorized to charge any fees related to this communication to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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By:


Daniel G. Shanley
Reg. No. 54,863

KENYON & KENYON LLP
1500 K Street, N.W., Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Tel: (202) 220-4200
Fax: (202) 220-4201